Play it Again Cinderella

a new view of old tales

Jane Smith

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a new view of old tales

To Ocida
with love
from
Jane Smith

an innovative approach to self-management by the author of

MORE POWER TO YOU

To Ocida,
We gisla from the
Man this how how
to create magic for
ourselves x Jane Smith 26/93

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ERROL LEE FULLEN

Play it Again
Cinderella

by Jane Smith

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Table of Contents

Looking Back 1

"Play it Again Cinderella" 2

Cinderella 4

The Emperor's New Clothes 8

King Thrushbeard 12

Snow White 16

Little Red Riding Hood 20

Looking Inward 23

The Princess and the Pea 26

The Frog Prince 30

Rapunzel 34

Jack and the Beanstalk 38

Sleeping Beauty 42

Looking Forward 45

Looking Back

Once upon a time fairy tales were not the sole property of children. They were folk tales designed for preliterate people as a way to pass along societal and cultural values. The tales changed as they were transmitted from teller to listener and from one country to another. Once written, however, the tale became more or less set with the structure remaining the same even if some details and episodes varied. The fairy stories have been with us for millennia. One version of *The Princess and the Pea* dates back to the third century in Kashmir. In this eastern tale the youngest of three princely brothers proved his heightened sensitivity by raising a huge blister after sleeping on seven mattresses under which was secreted a single human hair. *Snow White* has been around for centuries and is as old as the feminine rivalry which pits the aging beauty against the blossoming youth. While *The Frog Prince* is not as old as some stories, it is mentioned as early as the thirteenth century with *Sleeping Beauty* dating back to the fourteenth century and *Little Red Riding Hood* making her appearance as *Little Red Cap* in the seventeenth century.

The first important collection of fairy tales, *Tales of Times Past: Tales of My Mother Goose,* was written by Charles Perrault and published in France in 1697. He wrote serious but long-forgotten books and did not turn his talent to writing fairy stories until they became popular at the court of Louis XIV. The most famous collection, however, was published in 1812 by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm of Germany. They were scholars rather than story tellers and were absolutely stunned by the popular success of their volume *Nursery and Household Tales*. These two hundred and ten tall tales, filled with descriptions of murder, rape, abuse and cannibalism, became one of the best-selling of all German books. Then in 1837 Hans Christian Andersen published his work, *Tales Told For Children*, in Copenhagen. Unlike the brothers Grimm, he was poor and heard many of the tales at the almshouse where his grandmother worked. He was primarily a storyteller and from his fertile imagination he produced new heroines, such as *The Little Mermaid*. Since then the best-known heroines, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella have been popularized by Walt Disney, emerging as passive damsels in distress rather than role models for the twenty-first century. Since these tales have always carried important messages for both children and adults, it is now time to reset a few of these old gems.

"Play It Again, Cinderella"

Of all the fairy tale heroines, Cinderella, you're the best known, best loved and one of the oldest, dating back to the ninth century in China where the emphasis on your tiny slipper reflected the Chinese practice of foot binding. Was this because the tiny foot was highly esteemed or was it to slow you down? In any event, you stayed the course through as many as seven hundred versions of your story before you were committed to paper in 1697. Then it was Perrault of France who added the fairy godmother to the scene. At the same time, through an error in translation, your slipper *de vair,* meaning *of fur,* became your slipper *de verre,* meaning *of glass*. Whatever mistakes Perrault made, he truly immortalized you. But who are you really?

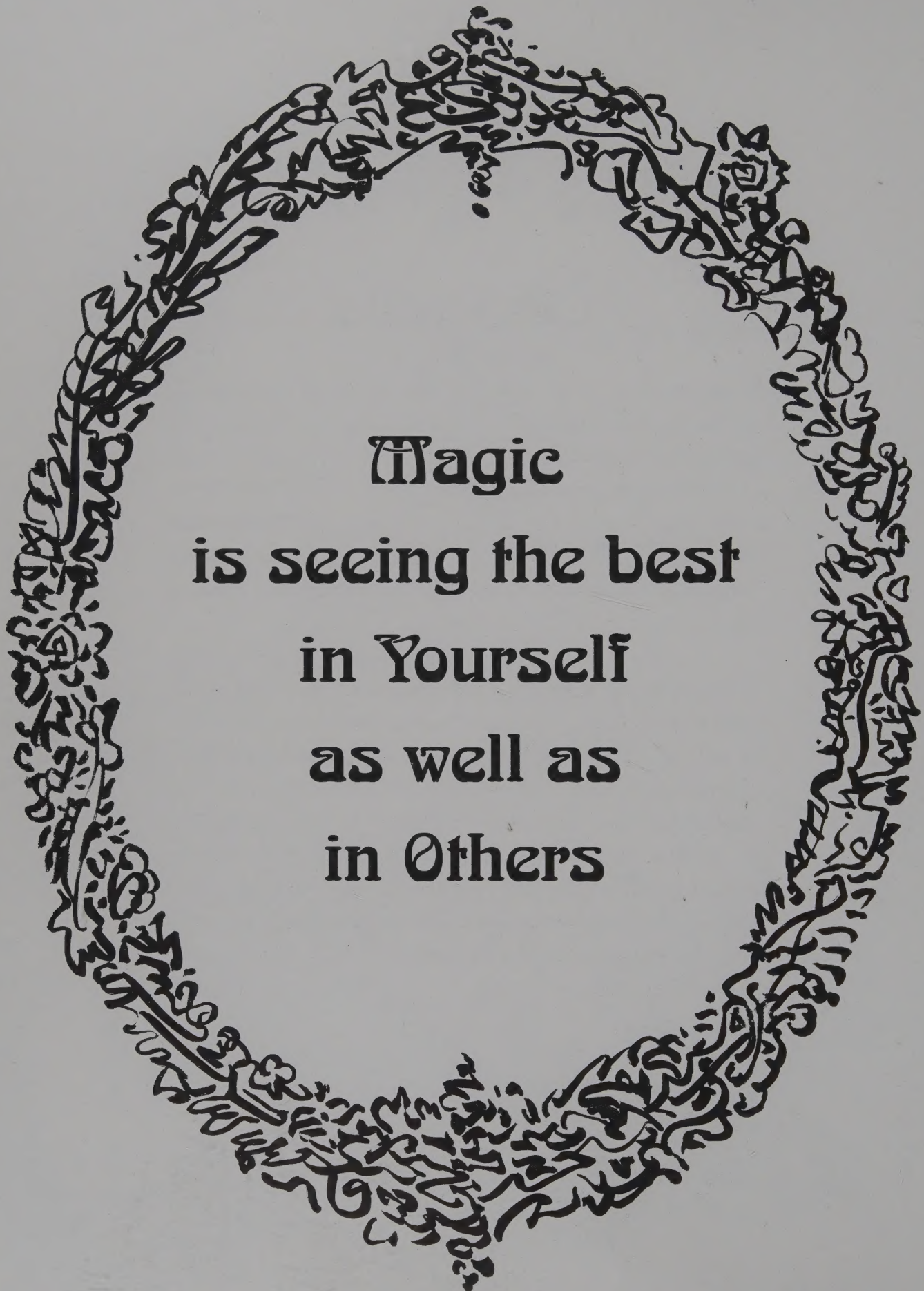
Although you fairy tale characters are all stereotypical, it took me a while to recognize you. Now I'd know you anywhere, Cinderella. You're the well-socialized woman. I guess the message has always been out there. If, as a woman, you are a helpmate and make other people's dreams come true; if you do the dutiful daughter thing and never complain; if you are totally accepting of your fate, eventually you will be rewarded. Cinderella, in some form, you've appeared in Egypt, Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. From the Chinese Cinderella, Yeh-hsien, who wished upon magic fishbones and married a rich merchant to Walt Disney's heroine who married a Prince, the same societal value has been in place. You, too, can go from rags to riches. Just don't rock the boat and eventually some man will take care of you and make you happy. Wrong! It's time to play it again, Cinderella.

Now let me introduce myself. I'm the effective modern godmother with the added touch of the efficient general manager. Call me "the GM". I no longer do magic. My new job description is to provide you with an opportunity to check out options, question motivation and predict consequences. By walking you through some good questions and self exploration, I hope to provide new ways to find new messages in old tales. Think of the process as intense distillation. The old-style fairy tales contain little conversation, just action. Now it's time to be more introspective, accept responsibility for yourself and not wait around to be rescued. We need to redefine magic. Instead of thinking of magic as an inexplicable or remarkable influence producing surprising results, let's define magic as ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Cinderella

Once upon a time, following the death of her mother, Cinderella's father remarried and she was forced into servitude by her evil stepmother. From morning to night, Cinderella's stepmother made her carry water, light fires, cook, clean, and wash for her ungrateful stepfamily. She had no bed of her own, so she slept in the ashes near the fireside. Because she was so dusty, covered with cinders, she was known as Cinderella.

One day there came the announcement of the King's Ball, open to all beautiful maidens, but Cinderella was forbidden to go. She sat abjectly by the fireplace until her fairy godmother arrived. The intervention of the fairy godmother and her magic wand really turned things around for Cinderella. She was beautifully outfitted, carried off to the ball in style, captivated the Prince, and lost her glass slipper. Later the Prince was able to recognize Cinderella when the lost glass slipper fit perfectly. And so they married and lived happily ever after.


Magic
is seeing the best
in Yourself
as well as
in Others

Revisiting Cinderella

The GM knows the importance of physical fitness.
She is, however, neither competitive nor compulsive about it. She enjoys herself.
Having set a personal best in her 5 km run, she arrives on the scene pumped and ready for action.
Cinderella rubs her fingers nervously and tentatively questions the GM:
Are you here to wave your magic wand?

No way, I'm here to make you think.
It's obvious you come from a dysfunctional family,
but are you going to do anything about it?

I don't really know, I don't even have anyone to talk to in this house.

What about your father?

At the mention of her father, Cinderella appears agitated,
but gradually anxiety gives way to relief and she speaks, emphasizing the first personal pronoun.
I'll confront him. After all, I don't have to put up with this treatment.
I can do the same amount of work elsewhere and get paid.
I could climb the corporate ladder. I'm good. I'm organized.
I have great interpersonal skills. I just need to learn how to delegate.

Right on! Now what about the gig at the palace.
All the beautiful people are invited, but you are forbidden to go.
Will you remain sweet-tempered and just accept whatever decisions are made for you?

No way. I really have been docile when I could have been doing things for myself.
I'll get washed up, do my hair, make a dress, walk to the ball if I have to, and dazzle the prince.
Now that's magic.

Suppose you don't dazzle the prince?

Who cares? I'll dance. I'll eat. I'll have a good time.

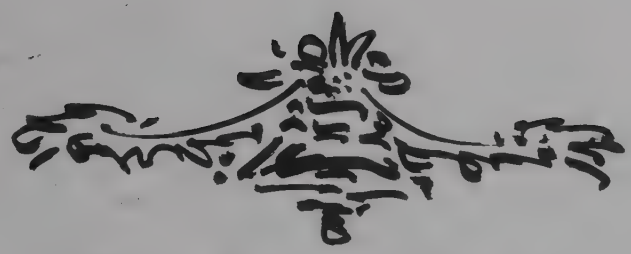
Now we're on the right track . . .
When the prince comes around with the glass slipper, tries it on your foot, it fits,
and he exclaims, "This is my own true bride", what will you say?

I'll say "Excuse me? How come you didn't recognize me before the slipper fit?
You don't even know my name.
Let's not get married, let's do lunch."

~ Observation ~

Women's shoes are often uncomfortable . . . especially glass slippers.

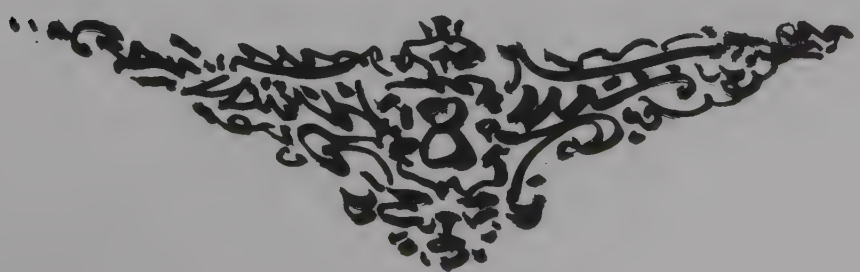
The Emperor's New Clothes



The Emperor's New Clothes

Once upon a time there lived an Emperor who was excessively fond of grand new clothes. He lavished all of his time, attention, and money on his clothing in order that he might always appear in the finest apparel. He had a coat for every hour of the day. In fact, he spent so much time deciding on his garments that his ministers would meet him in his wardrobe instead of the council chambers. There they would decide on matters of state and the Emperor's next fashion statement.

One day, two rogues arrived at the court and persuaded the Emperor to pay them a fantastic sum of money in exchange for the most splendid outfit in the land. The rogues claimed that their material was so fine that it was invisible to those who were unfit for office or incorrigibly stupid. They set up a loom, pretended to weave, and began a charade of cutting and sewing clothes that could not be seen. Those who examined the cloth, both individuals and committees, although they saw nothing, exclaimed at the exquisite beauty of the cloth, and its fine properties of colour and texture. Thus the emperor was deceived into riding through the streets stark naked. Everyone applauded, save one small child who exclaimed that the emperor wore no clothes.



There is more
to vision
than meets
the eye

Redressing the Emperor

The ophthalmologist's office is crowded and the GM has been waiting for over an hour
when the Emperor arrives for his overdue eye checkup.
She has heard about the Emperor's new clothes and is amused to take in the full measure of the man.
She is about to intervene when she hears a young voice:
Hey, Emperor, you're bare naked! Does your mother know you're out like that?

What do you mean I'm bare naked? People I've trusted said my clothing looked spectacular
but maybe they had a vested interest in saying what they thought I wanted to hear.

Do you mean they were afraid to tell the truth?

A few minutes pass while the Emperor reflects on this tough question and then answers candidly.
Just so.
Many people say they cherish the truth, but often an honest message is not welcome news.
If the message is something we don't want to hear, the tendency is to attack the messenger.
Sometimes truth is strong medicine and it needs to be administered in small doses.
Sometimes truth is offered with ill intent.
In my case, neither I nor my advisers had the courage to admit the truth to ourselves.

The child, growing disinterested,
changes the direction of the conversation back to being naked and asks another question.
Aren't you cold?

No, but I am humiliated.

Didn't you even look in the mirror when you had finished dressing?

The Emperor stares straight ahead, goes to a closet and finds a highly visible lab coat.
He rolls up his sleeves, swallows hard, and responds.
Yes, but I only lived to see my reflection in other people's eyes.
I was more concerned with how others saw me rather than how I saw myself.

Well, you sure learned the hard way, didn't you?

Yes, it was a hard lesson, and I could have saved myself a lot of embarrassment as well as money.
Next time I'll take a good honest look at myself and the motivation of others.
I'll surround myself with people who will give me honest feedback.
I'll be more of a workhorse and less of a clotheshorse.

~ Observation ~

In the eyes of a child, all adults have certain idiotic tendencies.

THE
HRUSHBEARD

King Thrushbeard

Once upon a time there was a King whose daughter was so beautiful and haughty that she thought there was no man in the kingdom who was worthy of her. She found fault with all the young men of high rank who came to ask for her hand in marriage. Even King Thrushbeard, the most eligible bachelor in the country, was rejected by the vain Princess.

Finally, her father shouted in exasperation that he would marry his daughter to the first beggar who came to the door. And he did. The Princess was carried off to a hovel by the lowly beggar. Along the way, the Princess saw fine property and possessions which, she was told, belonged to King Thrushbeard, the man she had refused to marry.

The Princess endured much hardship. Having been a pampered child all her life, she had none of the survival skills required in her new marriage. Under her husband's supervision and constant criticism, she spent years toiling unsuccessfully, weaving and making pots, which endeavours were not her choice, but his. Finally, he arranged for her to do the dirtiest work at the palace as a kitchen wench. One evening as she watched a magnificent ball, she was asked to dance by the glamorous and mighty King Thrushbeard, who revealed himself as her beggar husband out of his ragged disguise. Thereupon, they celebrated their true marriage.

Exploitation
and
Humiliation
do not
bring out the best
in People

Reeducating The Thrushbeards

The GM has been on the phone for hours, trying to track down her lawyer.
She has been subjected to voicemail, answering machines, muzak and other electronic devices.
The Princess, having waited for her appointment for some time,
is greeted by an irritable and impatient GM:
Princess, you've got attitude. Pride and vanity are going to bring you down!

It wasn't my fault.
Everyone had always lavished attention on me and told me I was amazingly beautiful.
I felt I could be critical of everyone in my search for the perfect man.

So you were relying on your beauty to make the world a special place for you.

Yes I did, and it worked for quite a while.

But did beauty help you manage your downward mobility?

No, beauty has nothing to do with good judgment.
By allowing my husband to choose jobs for which I had no talent, I set myself up to lose.
Was I really interested in controlling my own life or was I looking for someone to blame?

Close enough! And may I ask where were your powers of observation?
You spent years living with a man who led a double life as your beggar husband and a King,
and you never noticed anything strange?

Perhaps I was so busy feeling sorry for myself
and looking in the mirror that I didn't observe much else.

If we agree you were unobservant, how else could you describe yourself?

I was totally self-absorbed, seeing my habits as charming when they were actually annoying.
First I was a critic, then I was chattel.
It never occurred to me I had choices.
The Princess sighs audibly and moves away looking thoughtful.
She realizes she will have to relinquish her pride and view the world differently.

The GM is optimistic about her and turns her attention to the King.
And you, King Thrushbeard, will not escape unscathed. You had your own problems.
You were dedicated to teaching the princess a lesson and humiliating her in the process.
That's no way to run a relationship. That's a good way to ruin a relationship.

Well, whatever I did, I did in the name of love.

Unbelievable! You raise self-delusion to an art form!

~ Observation ~

If you don't control your own life, someone else will.

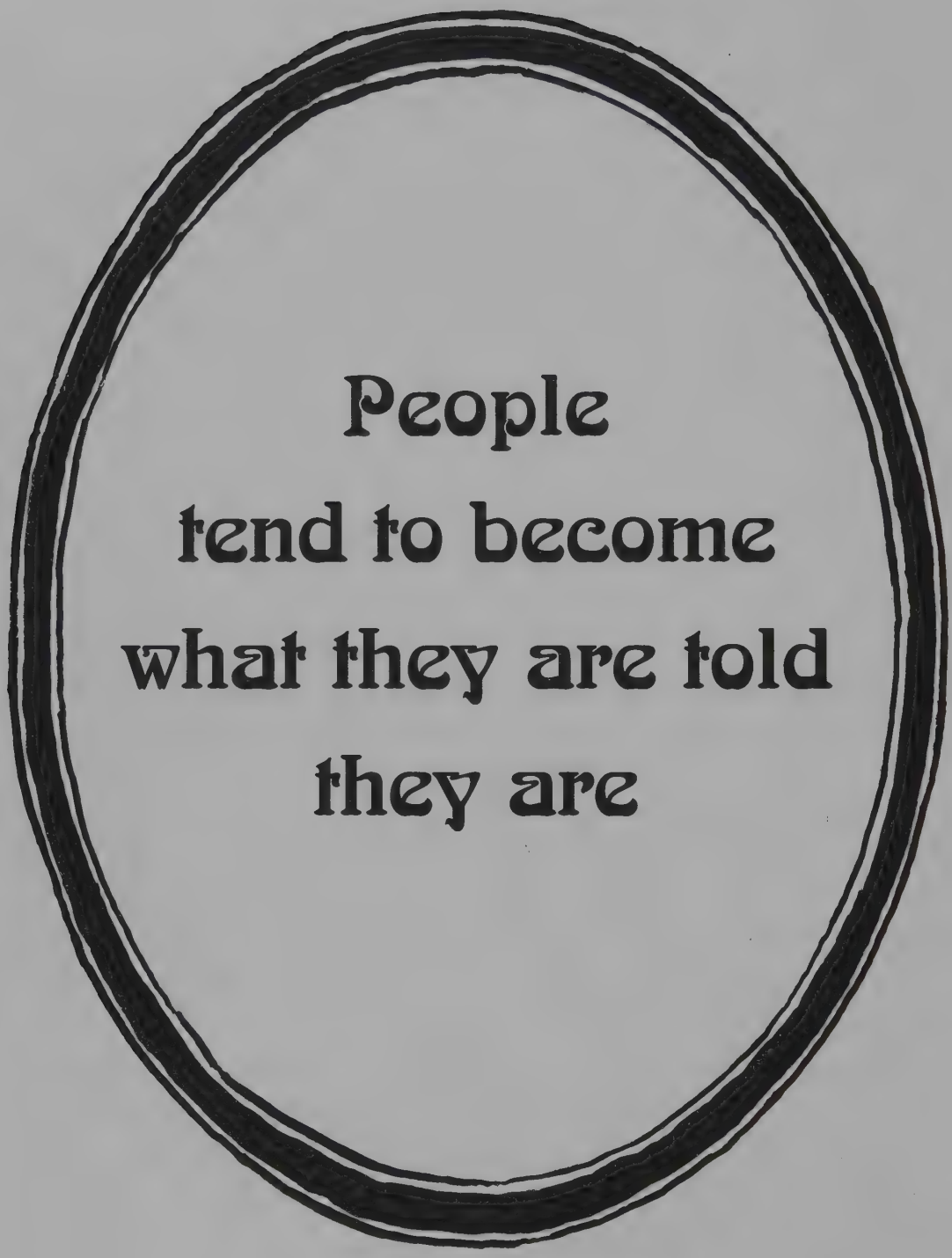
SNOW
WHITE

Snow White

Once upon a time a lovely girl was born. Her beauty was beyond question. Her hair was the colour of ebony, her lips as red as blood, and, because her skin was as white as snow, she was named Snow White. Her mother died as she was born, and Snow White's father immediately married another woman: beautiful, haughty, vain, and, above all, envious. Daily, the stepmother checked with her magic mirror, "Who is the fairest of all?" The response was always the same, "Snow White". Unable to bear it any longer, she arranged to have Snow White killed by a woodsman during a walk in the forest.

The kindly woodsman let Snow White escape into the woods, where she wandered, terrified and alone, until she came to a small cottage belonging to seven dwarfs. They said, "If you will clean, cook, wash, sew, knit, make the beds and take care of the house, you can stay with us and want for nothing." Snow White agreed, thinking herself safe and secure in the woods, away from her stepmother and surrounded by friends.

The jealous stepmother found Snow White with the help of her magic mirror. Three times she approached the young woman with poisonous devices designed to destroy: laces so tight they choked her, a poisoned comb, and a delicious but deadly apple. Following her death, the seven dwarfs mournfully carried Snow White's body to a mountain top. Snow White looked so lifelike in her glass coffin that the King's own son fell in love with her and paid the dwarfs so that he could keep Snow White by his side always. While his servants were moving the coffin, they dropped it and the morsel of poisoned apple was dislodged from her throat, thus reviving Snow White to life. She and the King's son were wed with great pomp and ceremony.


People
tend to become
what they are told
they are

Recolouring Snow White

Looking pleased with herself, the GM twirls across the room, smiling.
Her book of poetry has just been nominated for a prestigious award
and she is looking forward to an all-expense-paid trip to New York.
In a joyous voice, the GM addresses Snow White.
**Hi ho! Hi ho! You've won the beauty contest sponsored by the mirror-on-the-wall,
but did you ever pay a big price!**

Indeed, it made my stepmother really cranky.
She was especially jealous of my youth and made the decision to get rid of me.
I was abandoned in the forest, but fortunately was saved by the dwarfs.

Saved! They got a free housemother and housemaid.
Who saved who? How come you stayed with them?

I never really asked myself that question.
Maybe it was desperation, maybe I couldn't face the uncertainty of moving on,
or maybe I was just tired.

OK. OK. But why did you accept the dwarfs' deal without question?

Snow White turns on her CD, plays her favourite tune "I Want To Hold Your Hand".
She paces the floor and acknowledges to herself the validity of the GM's observations.
This doesn't make her happy, but it does make her think, and she finds her own voice,
You're absolutely right. I could have negotiated with those seven little guys
When they wanted me to be the maid, I could have said,
"Let's make a deal. I'll do the cooking, you do the cleaning,
I'll wash, you dry. In addition,
I'd like to find out more about your work in the mine and perhaps do some time management studies."

That's cool. But let me ask you this.
When the stranger arrived at the door, were you just a little naive to be taken in three times?

Yes, I was naive, but frankly I was bored and I was certainly attracted by the idea of free gifts.
In retrospect, I'd have to say my biggest problem was that I didn't know how to say "no".
I've always been a pleaser.

You got that part right!
Dependence clouds judgment. Have the confidence to ask more questions.
Be aware of what's not said.
Next time use "No" as a complete sentence.

~ Observation ~

Good negotiation skills are the magic of everyday life.

LITTLE
RED
RIDING
HOOD

Little Red Riding Hood

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Red Riding Hood because of the red cloak she always wore wherever she went. One day Little Red Riding Hood's mother gave her a basket of delicious treats to take to her kind old grandmother. Her mother warned the girl not to stray from the proper path and not to talk to strangers. In the woods, Little Red Riding Hood wandered into the forest to pick flowers and met a big bad wolf who asked her a lot of questions about where she was going and who she would see.

Little Red Riding Hood foolishly answered all his questions, and set off again through the woods to her grandmother's house. Because of the information the girl had given him, the wolf was able to run ahead. He fooled the girl's grandmother into letting him in, devoured the old woman and lay in wait for Little Red Riding Hood. When she arrived, Little Red Riding Hood noticed that her grandmother was looking strange, but she approached anyway.

And so the wolf ate her up.

Choose carefully
the People
you will trust

Reorienting Little Red Riding Hood

The GM has been conducting a class on effective communication skills.
Red's mother has been in attendance, but has not yet graduated.
The GM listens with interest when she sees Red join her mother after class.
The Mother goes into lecture mode.
Before you leave to visit your grandmother, I want to say a few words.
Beware of hoods in the woods. Stay on the beaten path.
Don't stand around answering dumb questions from strangers.

What about stopping to smell the roses?

Smell the roses? Get a grip!
You need to learn the difference between an adventure and a truly dangerous situation.
Develop your powers of observation and trust your instincts
rather than worrying about your sense of smell.

I was only trying to be polite when I answered all the wolf's questions.

I know I taught you to be polite,
but you have to assess whether someone deserves your courtesy.
The best reply to a rude question is, "I wonder why you're asking me this?"

Unable to conceal her annoyance, Red rocks back and forth on her heels.
Then she is able to breathe deeply, face her mother calmly and reply . . .
Good thinking. Asking that question volleys the conversational ball back to his court, actually questions his motivation, and gives me time to establish control over the discussion. Do you have any more sage advice?

As a final thought, Pay attention!
If someone doesn't look like your grandmother,
doesn't talk like your grandmother,
and doesn't act like your grandmother,
it's a good bet that she's not your grandmother.
The more you look, the more you see.

~ Observation ~

Don't you just hate it when your mother is right?

Looking

Good and evil. Stupid and clever. Ugly and beautiful. In modern times, these fairy tale messages need to be rethought into a more complex understanding of the survival skills necessary for today's world. The underlying message of many traditional tales is to rely on magic and someone to rescue you. Today we need images of people who can go out into the world by themselves and find their place or their purpose with confidence, courage and honesty. It is not only children who learn from fairy tales. As part of our cultural inheritance, we are continually playing out fairy stories in our daily lives. Controlling mothers, emotionally absent fathers, ineffective role models, dependent children, and manipulative lovers are part of our familiar psychic landscape.

Although fairy stories have changed over the centuries, two things remain fairly constant, the beginning and the ending. The beginning invariably is a theme of *Once upon a time*, which allows for an unspecified time or place; and the ending *and they lived happily ever after* is unequivocal and is part of their appeal. People want to know that good will triumph and the wicked will be punished. How we *BOO* the bad guys and *CHEER* for the good guys! How we long for old wrongs to be redressed! We all want life to be fair. We want to believe in the ending *and they lived happily ever after,* but this does close off further exploration and limits the imagination. A preferable ending would be: *and that's not the end of the story.*

When reading to a child, there are many questions to ask yourself: Do I want to develop curiosity? What message do I want conveyed? Do I want the world portrayed as black or white with no gray areas? Do I want all the characters to be perceived as stereotypes? Is the purpose to educate as well as to entertain? At the end of the story you might want to ask the child, *What do you think could have been done differently?*

There are many other questions of interest. Why are these stories called fairy tales? Rarely do fairies come in for much action or even mention. Why are there no evil stepfathers, when wicked, murderous stepmothers abound? Why don't the characters have real names? In the Grimms' collection only one hero in ten actually has a name.

Inward

No wonder these people felt generic and powerless over their fates. Without a name even a prince is colourless. Why are the most celebrated characters all female? Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood and Snow White are the best known and why are their activities all confined to the domestic sphere? Is the family the major thematic concern? In the final analysis are the characters heroes or are they victims?

Fairy tales present basic human predicaments in a very simple form that is easy to comprehend. The characters are not complex. They are either good or evil, nothing in-between, and we know unequivocally with whom we empathize. The greatest charm, however, lies in the fact that these stories are future oriented, thereby providing the hope that everything will work out well in the end. When we relate to fairy tales as cultural touchstones, we are really hoping that dreams can come true.

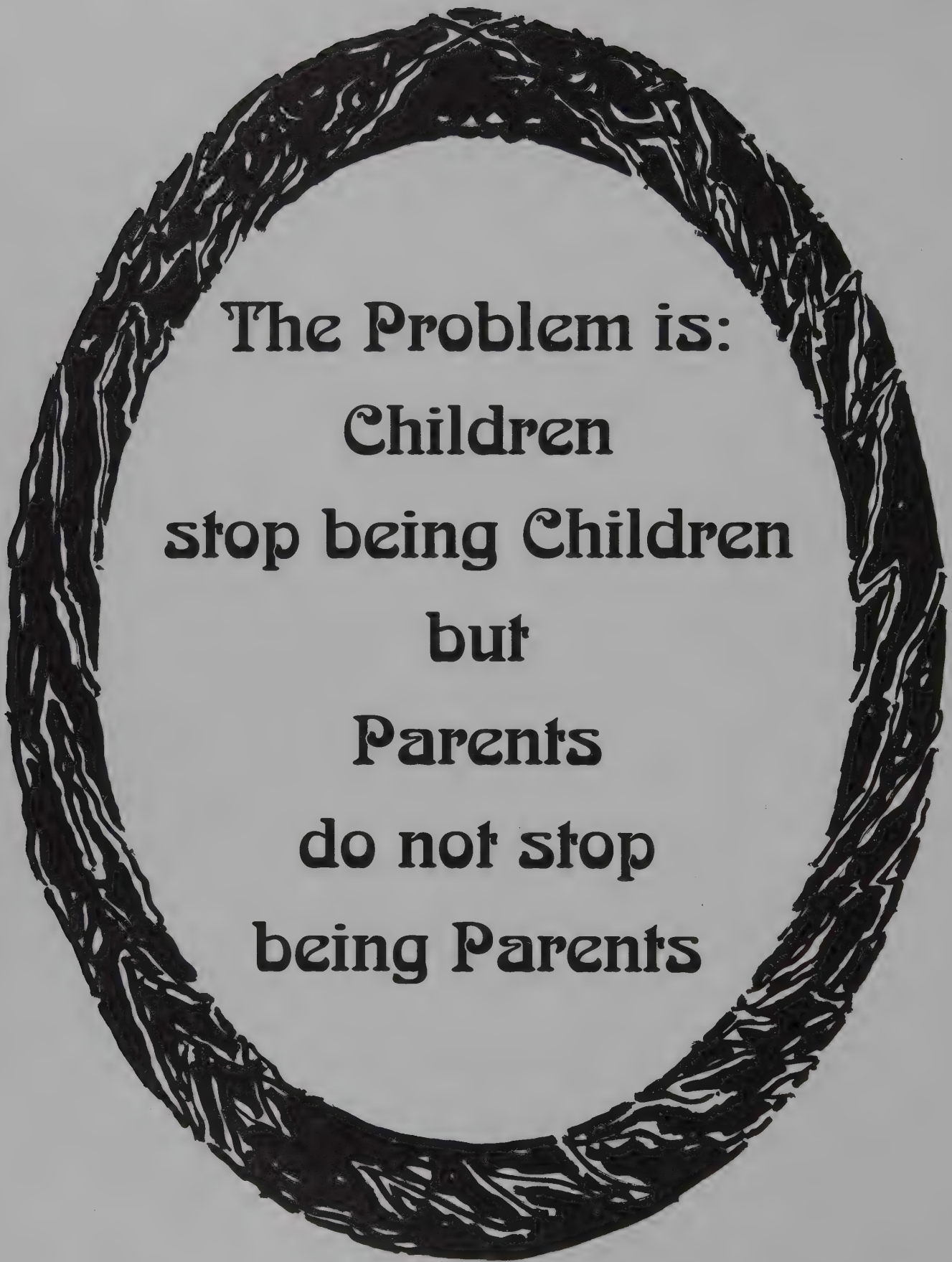
For all the external melodrama, these stories are concerned with inner realities. Bruno Bettelheim, the proponent of the psychological reading of fairy tales, wrote in his book *The Uses of Enchantment* that internal processes are externalized and made comprehensible as represented by the figures of the fairy story and its events. Jung studied the same tales to further his understanding of the human mind and Freud turned to them to improve his knowledge of dream symbols. Such are the underlying themes of the fairy stories that they have expressed man's hopes, dreams and fears throughout the ages. They reflect fundamental psychological truths rather than social realities.

In the fairy stories, as in real life, power resides totally in adults. To be a child is, as Al Capp suggests, like being a pygmy in a land of giants without a dime to your name. This perspective refers both to the child's real life as well as the world of fantasy, which may reflect the child's view of himself and his family. Therefore, the most reassuring message for the child is not the belief in the supernatural, but a belief in the natural and essential truth of their own growth. Just as they will grow physically, it is reassuring for them to know that they will grow emotionally and intellectually as well. Belief in the ability to grow and change is magic.

The Princess and the Pea

The Princess and the Pea

Once upon a time a Prince searched high and low for the perfect Princess to become his wife. His demanding mother, the Queen, felt that no one was good enough for her son, and rejected all his choices of potential brides. A true Princess worthy of her son, she said, would have to pass the test of twenty mattresses. Under an enormous pile of mattresses, the Queen would place a single pea. Only a true Princess would be delicate enough to feel the tiny pea; only the most worthy would be bruised by the pea after a night on the mattresses. The Prince waited many years until a woman was found who could not sleep because of the torment of the pea under the tower of mattresses. The happy Prince married her at once.


The Problem is:
Children
stop being Children
but
Parents
do not stop
being Parents

Renovating the Princess and the Pea

Over the past few weeks the Prince and the GM have been discussing mother/son relationships.
The Prince is not totally at ease with feelings. He prefers dealing with facts.
But he decides it is time for an open discussion with his mother, the Queen.
They return from yet another boring state dinner and are sipping cups of tea.
They are discussing the criteria for selecting a bride for the Prince,
who is indignant and feels no constraint to be diplomatic.
The Prince speaks honestly.

Mother, get a life of your own. This match-making thing doesn't work.
I know you want what you think is best for me, but you're using standards from a bygone era.
Selecting a wife on the basis of a bruise is an absurd notion.
If you think heightened sensitivity leads to heightened intelligence and insight,
you're into wishful thinking.
I'm going to find my own wife on my own terms.

But I've always given you advice, looked after your interests, and put your happiness first.
I was only trying to help.

It seems your help involves your standards rather than mine.
And could it be that you're more interested in propriety than my happiness?
I want to make my own decisions.

Let's face it. You've hardly been Prince Independence.
You've been living at my palace rent free, letting me pay your bills,
make your appointments, and choose your clothes.
If you want an adult relationship, you'll have to accept responsibility for yourself.

That's exactly my point.
I'm not your little boy anymore.
What you see as parental guidance, I see as parental interference.
I need to get a place of my own.
I'm going to develop my own style, live large and paint the big canvas.

The Queen, her thought processes picking up steam like a runaway train,
at first registers disbelief, then relief, and almost shouts.
Now you're on the cutting edge.
But before we make a public proclamation, let's talk some more.
We're going to need better communication between your palace and mine.

~ Observation ~

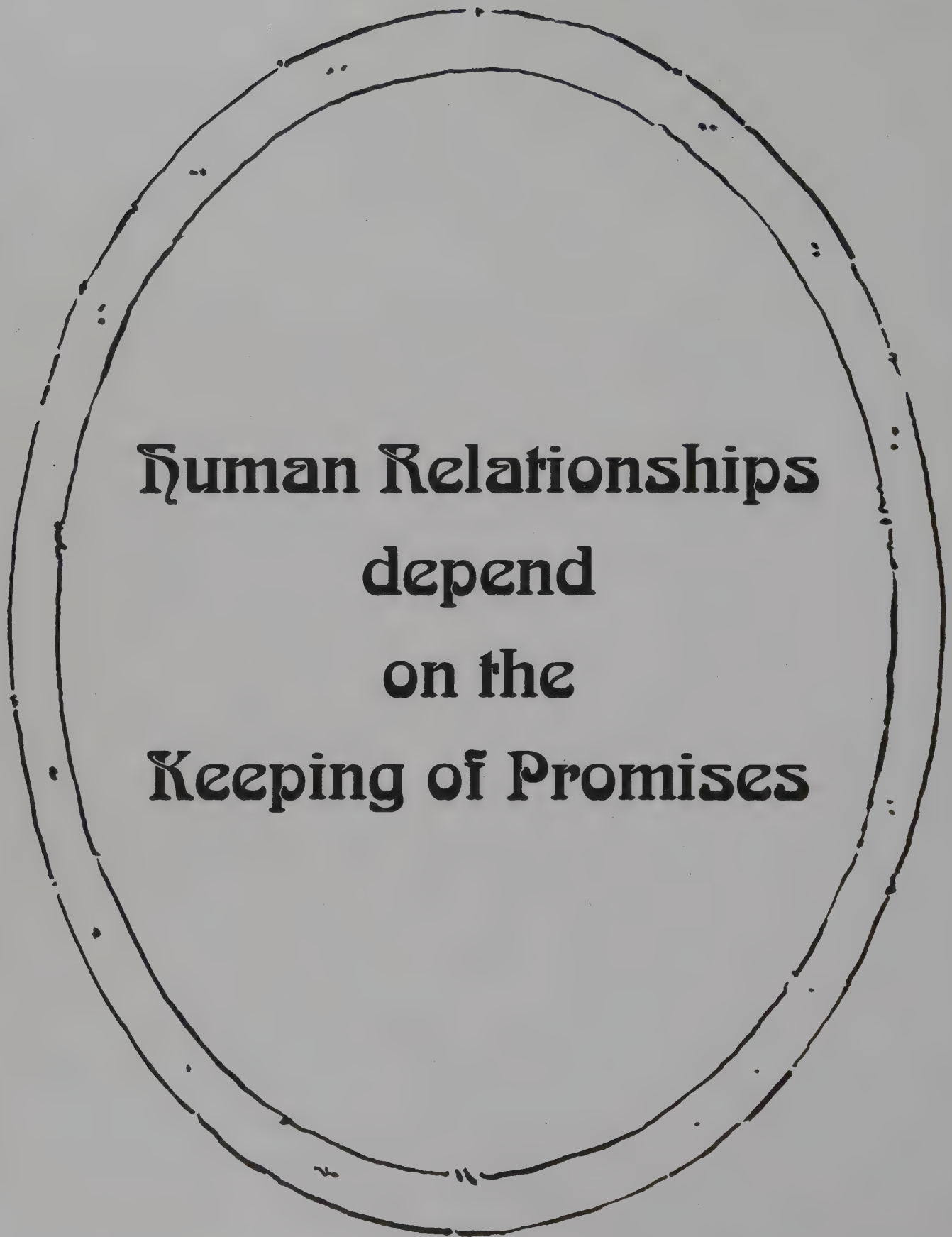
There's no sure-fire test for sensitivity.
Some people bruise easily because they have thin skins.

The Frog Prince

The Frog Prince

Once upon a time there was a beautiful Princess with a lovely golden ball. Her favourite pastime was to sit by the pond in the courtyard playing with her ball for hours on end. One day, the Princess dropped her ball into the pond, and wept bitterly because she could not retrieve it. An ugly frog appeared at the side of the pond and offered to retrieve the ball if the princess would love him forever. Without giving it much thought, and because she wanted her ball very much, the Princess agreed.

When she had the ball safely in her hand, the Princess cruelly laughed at the frog and his ugliness. The frog, heartbroken, persisted in his claim that the Princess keep her promise to love him forever. The King, her father, insisted that the Princess keep her word. In a fit of temper, the Princess picked up the frog and flung him at a wall. At that moment, the enchantment that had bound him was released and the frog was revealed as the most handsome Prince in the land. Taken in by his handsomeness, the Princess immediately fell in love. Shortly thereafter they married, and lived happily ever after.


Human Relationships
depend
on the
Keeping of Promises

Releasing the Frog Prince

Meetings! Meetings! Are they all necessary?
The GM arrives at this meeting looking harassed and somewhat distracted.
Her plane was late, her luggage lost, her hotel overbooked and she has been held up in traffic.
Still she remains polite and apologizes for her late arrival.
Sorry to keep you waiting, but it's been an exhausting day!
SO you're the guy who was a frog. Now do you want to get married or what?

I don't know. Maybe we're not going to live happily ever after. I don't know her very well.

Man, you know she has a temper.
How many times do you need to get thrown against a wall to know she is one mean momma?

Maybe she was just having a bad day or overdosed on caffeine.

Enough already with the excuses. To put it simply, do you trust her?

The Prince appears to be thinking about the past or perhaps listening to some inner music,
like the theme from "The Twilight Zone". Finally he looks up, his expression anxious, his voice faint.
No, I really can't trust her.
She didn't keep her word to love me. She grabbed her golden ball and ran.
She didn't honour her part of the bargain to keep me by her side until her father nagged her.
I was so in love and so vulnerable that I put up with unacceptable behaviour.
I guess I was in a daze and wasn't seeing clearly.

Who said love is blind; sometimes it sees more than is actually there.
One more question — do you really want to spend the rest of your life with someone
whose favourite pastime is throwing a gold ball in the air?

Not really, but when you are first in love with someone
their idiosyncrasies appear endearing and only later become terminally irritating;
or maybe I'm just overcome by what I feel I owe the person who rescued me from Frogdom.
In any case I think I need to reassess the situation.

You said it, not me. While you're in thinking mode,
why do you think she wanted to marry you when you were revealed as "His Handsomeness"?

She really is hung up on physical appearance, eh? Maybe her love will fade if my looks fade.

Believe it. So with her track record, are you going to say "Marry me please"?

I don't even need to think about it. I'm going to say "Thanks for the memories. Hasta la vista."

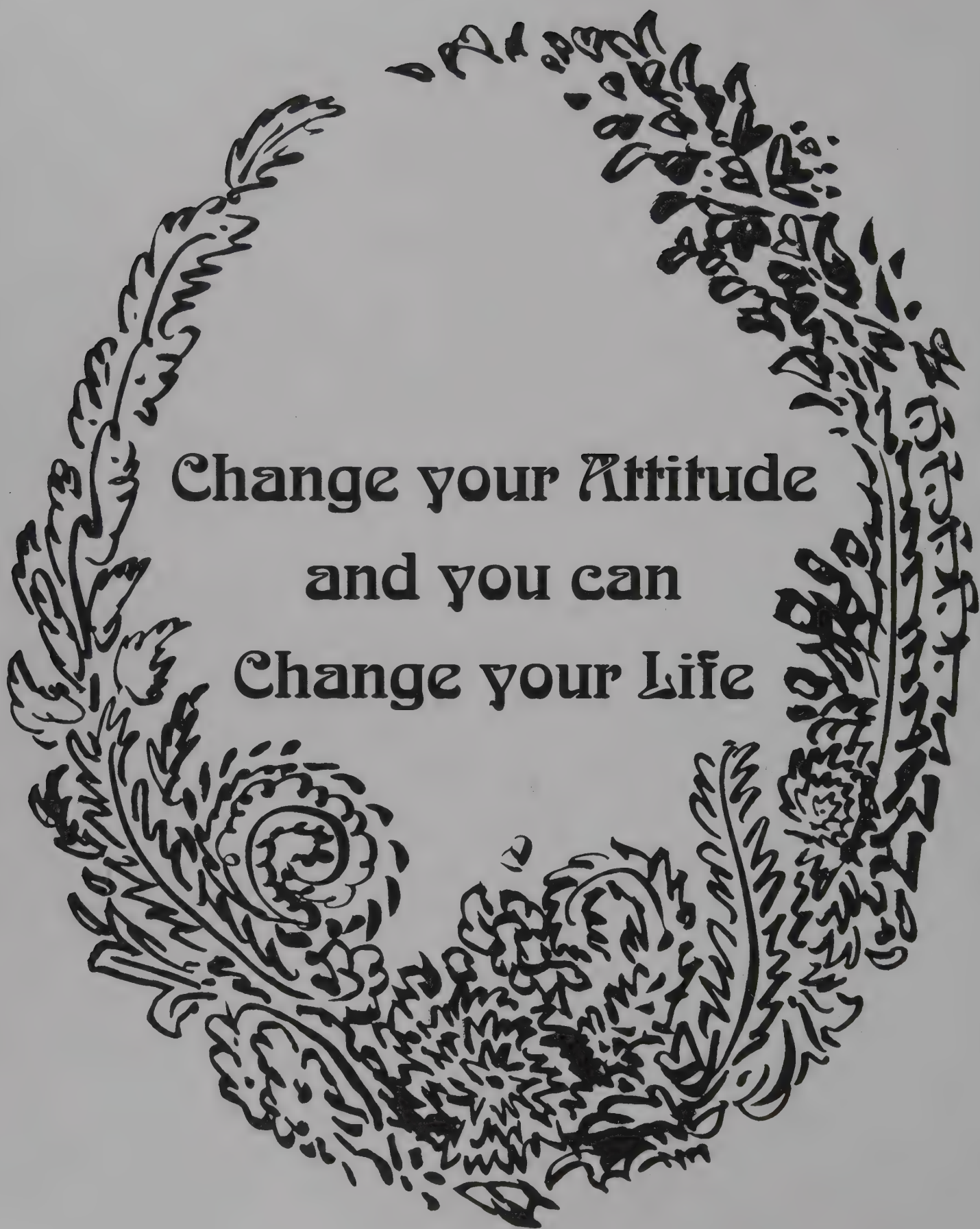
~ Observation ~

There's a bit of frog in every prince and a bit of flake in every Princess.
You can't judge a person by the skin they're in.

Rapunzel

Once upon a time a young pregnant woman had a fierce, unrelenting longing for rampion, a vegetable which grew in a witch's garden. Her husband ventured into the garden, but was caught by the witch and forced to make a deal. In exchange for sparing his life and providing an unlimited supply of rampion, he agreed to give the witch his soon-to-be-born child.

When the baby, a beautiful girl, was born the witch claimed her, called her Rapunzel (another name for rampion), and imprisoned her in a tower. This tower was isolated in a forest, without staircase or doors, and only one small window at the very top. Rapunzel's only communication with the outside world was with the witch, who came to check on her from time to time. Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, as fine as spun gold, woven into two braids. She would unfasten her tresses, wind them around one of the hooks on the window, and let her hair fall down to let the witch climb up the tower. Rapunzel lived in miserable solitude waiting to be rescued by the handsome prince of her frequent dreams.


Change your Attitude
and you can
Change your Life

Rehabilitating Rapunzel

The GM yawns and stretches, sips her mineral water and pops a multivitamin into her mouth. She has spent the morning in her office updating her files and balancing her cheque book. Now she watches her new client take a seat opposite her.
The GM introduces herself, checks her clipboard and confronts Rapunzel.
So what's really going on here?

I've been shut up in a tower by a wicked witch.

Just a minute. Let's back up the bus. How did you fall into the clutches of the witch?

My parents gave me to her when I was born.

Why? Were you sold? Were you part of a surrogate deal? What?

Slow down with the questions.
All I know is that my mother thought she would die if she didn't get rampion
and I was exchanged for an unlimited supply of it.

Let's be honest. Your mother was an addict and your father was a codependent.
He was a coward, interested in taking the easy way out.
He was willing to give you up to save himself.
With parents like that, a witch would look good.

Not exactly, living under the control of a witch was hardly a nurturing experience.

But you seem relatively unscathed, except in the area of motivation.

There is a long pause. Rapunzel endures the silence, nods to herself and faces the truth.
She doesn't enjoy being prodded with a sharp stick,
but it does provide momentum and she articulates a new view.
I blew it!
I had always thought that I was imprisoned in the tower by a wicked witch.
Now I realize that the prison was of my own making.
I had choices.
My escape lay within my own power.
Say good-bye to those long golden tresses,
cut them off, wrap them around a hook, use them as a rope, and holler,
"I'm out of here!"

~ Observation ~

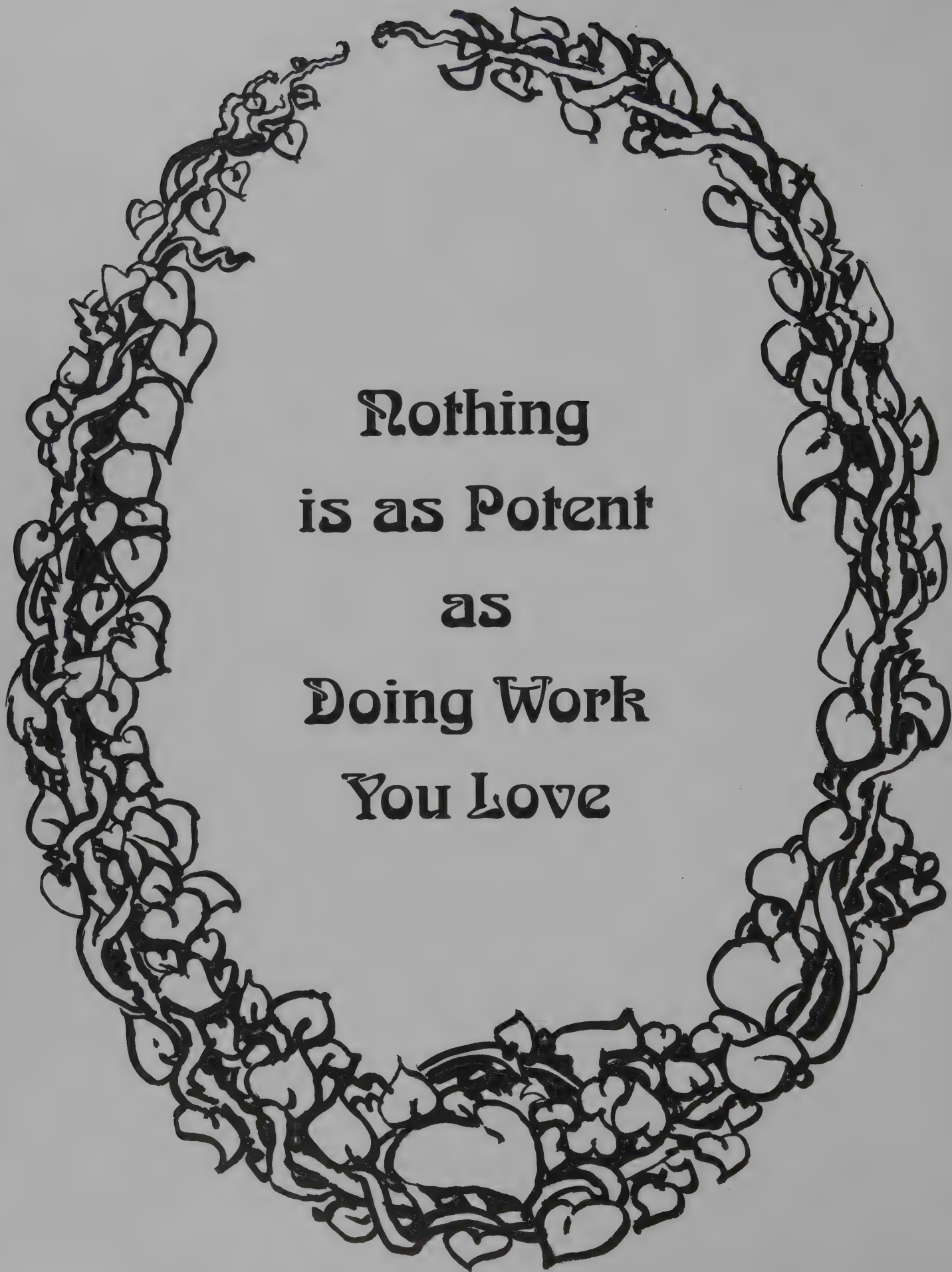
Scale the walls of your family myths.
Quit blaming and set yourself free.

JACK
AT THE
BEANSTALK

Jack and the Beanstalk

Once upon a time there was a family who fell on hard times. They had no worldly possessions except for their family cow. One day their son, Jack, was sent to market to sell the cow for a good price. On the way to the market Jack met a man who offered to take the cow in exchange for five beans which he claimed were magic. Jack made the trade and went home to the fury of his family. "Five lousy beans for one good cow!" they cried. But, when Jack planted a bean, it grew into an enormous bean stalk that led to a rich and marvelous castle in the sky. There Jack met a fearsome ogre who wanted to eat Jack for dinner. In his escape from the castle Jack stole a bag of gold and brought it home, much to the delight of his family.

The bag of gold was soon gone. Jack planted another bean, went back to the castle and stole a magic hen which laid golden eggs. It was the marvel of all the country. People came from all over to see the magical hen, and Jack's family began to prosper. Jack planted another bean and went to the castle to steal a magic harp to entertain his visitors, but he was caught and chased by the dreadful ogre. While the ogre was climbing down the magic beanstalk in pursuit of Jack, the boy chopped it down. The ogre fell to earth with a terrible thump and was dead.


Nothing
is as Potent
as
Doing Work
You Love

Replanting Jack's Beanstalk

Jack is sprawled in his la-z-boy recliner,
listening to harp music on his synthesizer, when the GM stomps into his room.
She is not prepared to be tolerant of his idle ways and his lack of involvement with the real world. The GM scowls and speaks tersely.
Get off your back, Jack and check out your life-style options!

What do you mean?

Are you happy not working, just lying about being bland and boring?

Well, I could get involved in some environmental protection
rather than chopping down vegetation, but I don't have any contacts.
One of these days . . .

The GM interrupts.
One of these days is none of these days. Why are you so passive?
Did your parents set a good example? What gives you a sense of achievement?
What are your long-term goals?

Whoa! These questions are overwhelming. I was following family tradition.
My father spent most of his life in bed.
We went through the stolen gold in record time with no thought for the future.
Planning was just not a family priority.

Here's where the rubber hits the road. They should have told you it's wrong to steal.

But . . .

Get off your but, Jack.

Jack finds himself in the grip of a new kind of mood, scary yet exhilarating.
No longer will he be passive. He will accept responsibility for himself
and will be useful as well as ornamental. He responds.
You've given me a lot to think about.
I'm bored watching that hen lay eggs and listening to harp music.
I need to find my passion, make a plan, get career counselling.

Can you say "work"?

~ Observation ~

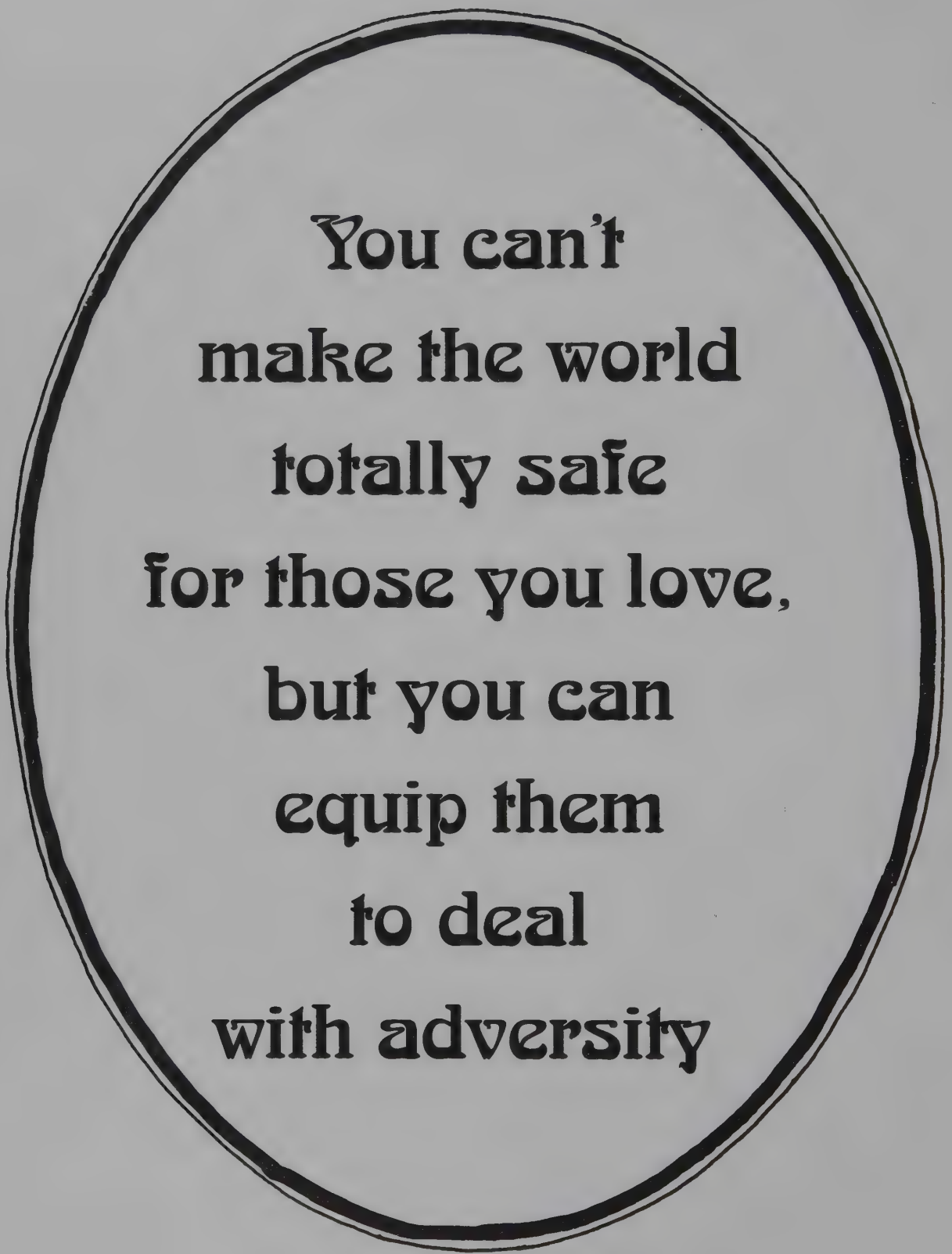
All play and no work makes Jack a dull boy.

Sleeping
Beauty

Sleeping Beauty

Once upon a time there was a queen who gave birth to her first and only child, a beautiful baby girl. For his wonderful daughter, the proud King prepared an extraordinary christening party, to which he invited all the fairies of the kingdom, except one, who was particularly bad tempered. The twelve fairies were made godmothers by the king and they bestowed upon the baby girl attributes they thought she would need: wit, charm, beauty, skill in song, grace in dance, talent in music and so on. Before the final gift was bestowed, the angry uninvited fairy appeared and cursed the tiny girl with death at age fifteen. The death would come, she cackled, by the pricking of the princess' finger with the distaff of a spinning needle. The horror of the curse was only slightly diminished by the intervention of the last fairy godmother. She commuted the Princess' death to a long sleep which could only be broken by the arrival of a handsome prince.

The Princess' anxious parents banned all spinning and sewing from the castle, and decreed all distaffs in the kingdom be burned. On the day of her fifteenth birthday, with her parents away, the Princess wandered into a faraway room in the castle, where she encountered an old woman spinning thread. Enchanted with this new activity, the Princess offered to help the old woman. The moment she touched the unfamiliar spindle, she pricked herself and fell into a deep sleep. There she lay for a hundred years until the spell was broken by the arrival of the handsome Prince. They fell in love at first sight, married, and lived happily ever after.


You can't
make the world
totally safe
for those you love,
but you can
equip them
to deal
with adversity

Rousing Sleeping Beauty

Her perfume precedes her by a second or two,
but it's the GM's commanding presence which catches the attention of the audience.
In the eyes of the GM the Sleeping Beauty Group has turned in a lackluster performance.
As she checks their evaluation sheets, she blows the whistle.
Listen up, all you characters, I've got news for you.
First you, bad fairy, did it ever occur to you that you hadn't been invited to the party because you were a bad-tempered, negative person?

Well, I'm old and not very interesting.

See, does that prove what I said about being negative, or what?
How could you change this loser image? Do you want to commit social suicide?

I guess I could be more interested in other people and less concerned about myself.
If I'm genuine, people will respond; if I want to receive invitations, I'll have to give invitations.

And you, good fairies, did you really look at the gifts you bestowed on the princess.
They were all social graces. Give me a break. Out there in the real world it's tough.
What about some survival skills like common sense, discipline and independence?

But they were all gifts that we thought a Princess should have.

That's the problem. You were more concerned about what a Princess should be, rather than what a Princess could be.

The GM is not totally satisfied with this interaction,
but she moves on to the parents and Sleeping Beauty.
Parents, I have one question for you.
Instead of trying to make your kingdom totally safe for your daughter,
would it not have been better to explain the dangers to your daughter
and give her some responsibility for her own safety?

And now, Sleeping Beauty, I have two words for you. Wake up!
You've been out of circulation for a hundred years
and the first thing you want to do is get married.
Girl, it's all uncharted territory out there. Just hang out and be an observer for awhile.

Sleeping Beauty shakes her head as if to clear out the cobwebs and smiles.
That sounds reasonable. I'm too young to be married. I need to live a little and learn a lot.

I think she's got it!

~ Observation ~

Love at first sight may require a second look.

Looking Forward

Long after the Freudians have finished their analysis, the Jungians have sorted out the symbolism, sociologists have finished their research, teachers have registered their criticism, and skeptics have had their say, the fairy stories will still remain. In the wonderful words of Dr. Jane Yolen, *I believe that the continuum of literature is best maintained by those tales of fantasy, those crafted visions and bits and pieces of dream-remembering that link our past and our future. To do without tales and stories or books is to lose humanity's past, is to have no star map for our future.*

Children's literature has always represented society's threats as well as its ideals. Child abuse, drugs, murder, violence and racism are all now features of the six-o'clock news. In presenting society's problems, reading can be the least traumatic encounter for the child. It provides an opportunity for the child and parent to be involved together in a thinking and analytical approach rather than just accepting the message from the newscaster. This process can help to stimulate independent thought and contribute to better communication skills. Books are bridges between the generations. C.S. Lewis writes, *The child as reader is neither to be patronized nor idolized; we talk to him man to man.* To me this means treating the child with respect. Since the fairy tales confront a child with basic human predicaments, it is the child who can best judge what he is ready to handle. Even if you can correctly guess why a child has become involved in a certain fairy story, keep that knowledge to yourself. It is best not to be intrusive, but to wait for a child to offer you the gift of sharing his feelings. How wonderful and powerful for a child to feel that his thoughts are not known until he decides to reveal them. This sentiment is expressed well by Dr. Bruno Bettelheim, *We grow, we find meaning in life, security in ourselves by having understood and solved personal problems on our own, not by having them explained to us by others.*

It is my hope that readers, male and female, young and old, will continue to enjoy fairy stories for their educational and cultural value. But it is also my hope that they will search for qualities other than passivity and physical beauty. To return to the great oral tradition of fairy stories could provide a personal imprint and stress the importance of characteristics such as the acceptance of responsibility, the ability to change and to initiate. Such traits make strong, confident human beings who are not afraid to delve deep within themselves and to reach out towards the unknown.

Play it Again Cinderella

presents a new way of looking at favorite fairy tales. Stereotypical characters are given new voices, and these ten age-old tales have been reconstructed to address today's issues. The Fairy Godmother becomes the GM, and leads the reader to new conclusions revealing the human potential to grow and change.

Jane Smith

is a lawyer, writer and motivational speaker. Her first book, MORE POWER TO YOU, grew out of her belief that anything is possible if you take ownership of your own life. She is a popular keynote speaker, and presents workshops on innovative approaches to self development to numerous organizations.

ERROL LEE FULLEN

is a full-time painter, sculptor and illustrator. He received his MFA from the University of Calgary. He has taught painting and drawing at both the Alberta College of Art and the University of Calgary.

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